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Imperialism: Colonial Independence FRQ

Decolonization marks the end of imperialism. Imperialism is one country's political, economic, or military take over of another territory. After centuries of distraction for Europeans with differing conflicts, their means and motives shifted back to imperialism- a shift of attention on the economic to political. Sadly, out of imperialism, began World War II, the biggest, most widespread, and by far the deadliest global war in history. Following the period of imperialism and World War II, almost all European colonies achieved independence. Some major factors that led to the decolonization of former European colonies were the position of European powers after the second world war and the expansion of nationalism/ anti-colonial nationalism.

The struggles of Europe in the time following World War II led European colonies to independence. The period after World War II was a period of utter chaos, with masses of lost lives and Europe left in ruins. Luckily for the colonies, European nations were focused on domestic policy and could not afford to spend time on their colonial economies when there were so many economic problems in the mother country. The attention of the Europeans' was one reason for the rapid increase in decolonization after World War II. Specifically, after the war, failed attempts at peace (by means of peace treaties) throughout Europe were made. Territory was taken away from any ally of Hitler, and Nazi leaders were arrested and punished- some with the death sentence. Despite these actions, further issues resided in Europe including the unhappiness of the Europeans, exhausted from the war. The world's inability to work together to

solve international crises such as the disasters that needed to be dealt with at the time and the universal understanding that mankind would not be able to survive a third world war, led to the birth of the United Nations in 1945. The United Nations began to slowly grant independence to some European colonies as to stay in sync with their policies of justice, unity, and retaining international peace. As previously mentioned, European nations were very focused on the domestic issues directly after the war. Even after the rise of the United Nations, this was still the case. The United Nations issued a trade embargo on Spain, directly causing some economic pressure in Europe. Stress from Europe's domestic and international affairs after World War II led European colonies to independence.

The expansion of nationalism in the period after World War II led European colonies to independence. Nationalism is a belief system that deals with the devotion and patriotism of oneself to their nation, whatever that may be. Some extremists go on to say that one must be ready to take any measure including self sacrifice or war to protect one's own nation. As the ideas of nationalism progressed and modernized to extend to justify other ideas of the time, former European colonies longed for independence . After the second world war, a new form of nationalism came along, called anti-colonial nationalism. The purpose of this form of nationalism was largely in response to the territories' of Africa and Asia being held by foreign authority. Anti-colonial nationalism is simply opposition to imperialism. As previously mentioned, decolonization marked the end of imperialism and anti-colonial nationalism proves a clear example. Benedict Anderson, a leader in the expansion of nationalism, argued that anti-colonial nationalism is based on the experience of extremely intelligent intellectuals who are experts in imperialism therefore would be reliable sources of information as to the accuracy of

the anti-colonial nationalism claims, to declare former European colonies independent. The expansion of nationalism in the period after World War II led European colonies to independence.

The position of European powers after the second world war and the expansion of nationalism/ anti-colonial nationalism is said to have caused former European colonies to have become independent. But when did this decolonization actually occur? Decolonization began in Africa between 1950 and 1960 while other territories gained independence earlier, like the British colonies of Burma and Ceylon in 1948. In Algeria, a war for independence lasted for eight years until they were finally given independence. Finally by the year 1970, after forty five years of organization, restructuring, resurfacing, and all sorts of politics, virtually all European colonies had achieved independence.